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ABSTRACT

This study examined the interreligious and interdenominational dimensions of the civil rights movement as reflected in the pages of the "Christian Century," the leading liberal, Protestant, intellectual periodical during the 1960s. Cooperation among organizations such as the National Council of Churches and other Jewish and Catholic organizations throughout the United States played a very important role in the movement. The reports, commissions, conferences, and special events put together by religious groups demonstrated a genuine interreligious and interdenominational dimension throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Letter-writing campaigns, lunch counter sit-ins, and marches and demonstrations were participated in by members of all faiths and supported by a wide variety of religious organizations. The influence of "Christian Century" itself on the movement is also described. A 26-item bibliography is included. (DB)

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INTERRELIGIOUS AND INTERDENOMINATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Michael Shermis

Submitted to the faculty of the Graduate School
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the degree
Master of Arts
in the Department of Religious Studies
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I. Introduction

The "1960s" were unique in the history of our democracy. It was a time when a minority people rose up in active protest against those who would withhold from them the most basic civil rights. This protest also manifested itself in an interdenominational, and later interreligious, context and brought with it an unprecedented involvement by different religious groups uniting for rights which they asserted were intrinsically important for human existence.

In this study I will examine the interreligious and interdenominational dimensions of the civil rights movement as reflected in the pages of the Christian Century, the leading liberal, Protestant intellectual periodical during these years. The chronological limits of this project will embrace the "Sixties," here defined as the period extending from the landmark decision of the Supreme Court in 1954, Brown v. The Board of Education, to the death of Martin Luther King, Jr., in April of 1968. My primary intention is to discover by means of historical investigation what role interreligious and interdenominational cooperation played in the fight for civil rights. I will attempt to determine the role of the Christian Century in the conflict and to gauge the impact of interreligious and interdenominational cooperation on the civil rights movement. Cooperation by organizations with an interreligious or interdenominational character that have publicly issued civil rights statements will

be analyzed. I will also examine instances where the Christian Century focuses on the interreligious or interdenominational make-up of those fighting for civil rights.

With the Supreme Court's ruling that "in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place," and "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal,"[1] we begin the era of the civil rights movement. The civil rights movement, although beginning in the mid fifties, is identified with the sixties and was seen as a time of deep and unsettling conflict. The sixties has been viewed as a complex era that began a new age in human relations which affirmed religious and racial tolerance. This was also a time of social, political, cultural, and religious upheaval. The 1960s are now seen by many historians as "a turning point in American religious life,"[2] and one commentator has called them a time of "intense religious restructuring."[3]

During the sixties there were many changes in the realms of faith. Protest against discrimination and hostility, which had been muted for a century, came out into the open, to begin the long delayed process of social and historical transformation.

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[1]Leon Friedman, ed., The Civil Rights Reader: Basic Documents of the Civil Rights Movement (New York: Walker and Co., 1967), p. 32.

[2]Wade Clark Roof and William McKinney, American Mainline Religion: Its Changing Shape and Future (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987), p. 11.

[3]Robert Wuthnow, The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith since World War II (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 153.

Students engaged in sit-ins at lunch-counters, freedom rides, marches, and demonstrations. Members of many religious faiths joined in these social protests. And because of these joint efforts it would be difficult to overstate the moral and historical significance of the civil rights movement.

"Before the 1960s, American religious groups had been active in the area of race relations mainly through pronouncements."[4] Certain events in the mid sixties, however, brought religious organizations and the churches into a new and much more conflicting stage of civil rights movement. These were:

> (1) the establishment of active interreligious conferences on religion and race in many major cities; (2) the cosponsorship of the March on Washington by the National Council Commission; (3) the persistent job of supporting the Civil Rights Bill for nearly twelve months in all parts of the country; (4) the volunteer service rendered in Mississippi by thousands of churchmen and the training of student volunteers by the Commission on Religion and Race; (5) the co-ordination of work in northern cities by religious forces, when the civil rights movement seemed hopelessly polarized; (6) the rallying of people to support the demonstration in Selma, Alabama; and (7) the support of the 1965 voting bill.[5]

Religious organizations and individuals can thus be seen as playing a major role in the civil rights movement. From the middle of the 1950s to the end of the 1960s is a period when a wide variety of people and events coalesced into an explosive chapter in American history. Religion played a major role in the

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[4]Henry Clark, "The National Council of Churches Commission on Religion and Race," chapter in American Mosaic, eds. Phillip Hammond and Benton Johnson, (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 255.

[5]Robert W. Spike, The Freedom Revolution and the Churches, (New York Association Press, 1965), p.86.

writing of the pages in this chapter. What proved intriguing in this story was that individuals and organizations joined together to change American society. A 1958 survey of metropolitan Detroit "revealed wide differences in the religious practices, social positions, and attitudes of these three groups [Catholics, Protestants, and Jews]. Not only were the three divided by differences in ethnic background, tradition, and socioeconomic standing, they were also separated from one another by suspicion, prejudice, and a lack of social contact."[6] Considering such alienating and divisive factors, it is all the more amazing that interreligious and interdenominational alliances even formed at all. From the very beginning, however, the civil rights movement in this country had an interdenominational dimension. In March of 1955, the Montgomery bus boycott began, and it was there that members of the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance and other leaders of several denominations joined together to fight for social justice. This initiated the interdenominational, and later interreligious efforts, that this study will show endured for fifteen years and were factors in changing the very foundations of American society.

This study is based primarily upon a content analysis of the news items, articles, and editorials appearing in the pages of the Christian Century between 1954 and 1968. This journal was chosen because of its national significance as a voice for mainstream Protestantism and because of the strong continuing

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[6]Wuthnow, p. 71.

commitment of its editors to liberal social causes. A number of significant secondary sources related to this topic and period have also been identified and will be used to provide background and context.

Editorials, articles, and news reports from the Christian Century addressed the themes of the value of religious pluralism, the necessity for supporting political liberalism, and the quest for social justice. The Christian Century has stated that as a liberal journal of Christian opinion it "endeavors to bring a critical and creative spirit to focus on contemporary questions of cultural, social, economic or political significance. It is concerned with the bearing of Christian principles on all issues of human relations, personal or social, national or international, ecclesiastical or cultural." Its "primary aim is to influence the churches and through them the social order. . . without regard to whether it has or lacks denominational ties." (75:771)

There was also a major focus on interfaith concerns. To place the magnitude of this focus in context, it must be noted that the interests of the Christian Century cut across a broad range of other social issues that had interreligious and interdenominational dimensions. It also covered the involvement of interreligious and interdenominational efforts in the areas of alcohol, animal experimentation, juvenile delinquency, intercity rehabilitation, prison reform, crime, television programming, pornography, education, law, rebuilding churches, anti-war

resistance, economic issues, poverty, dialogue, and mental health.

II. Content Analysis

The analysis will first concentrate on the editorials and a few of the writers of the Christian Century. Then the sociological data, which includes reports, commissions, conferences, special events, gender, organizations, and the clergy will be investigated. Next the principles and values of the people who make up the news and the contributors to the Christian Century will be explored. Finally other issues that are related to the focus of this paper, e.g., housing, legislation, the schools, and the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. will be examined.

Christian Century

This content analysis will begin with the Christian Century's first discussion of the Supreme Court's decision on Brown v. the Topeka Board of Education handed down in May of 1954. The Christian Century stated in an editorial on May 26, that the Brown v. Board of Education, "is not simply an opportunity which is thus offered the churches; it is a Christian responsibility." (71:627) The idea that it was jointly the

churches' Christian responsibility to stand against segregation is reaffirmed in an editorial nearly a year later when the editors declared that this ruling "lays a heavy burden of responsibility on the churches of the United States." (72:701)

The editor of the Christian Century at the time, Kyle Haselden, was interested in defining the religious responsibility of the churches in the civil rights movement. In an editorial discussing Haselden's book, The Racial Question in Christian Perspective, it is asserted that "the mandate of the Judeo-Christian tradition and a realistic attack on the problems of metropolitan life require movement toward integrated communities. . . and call for a clear policy on the part of churches and related institutions to make their facilities available without racial discrimination." (77:37) Haselden himself contends that "the church is the social institution which most significantly influences the total life and development of the Negro." (77:37) So, the stage is set early by a leading actor. With an editor at the helm who not only sees the role the church can play, but considers it a "mandate" for the church to make positive changes, we can begin to see how this journal will cover this period.

Before further developing this analysis of the editorial stances of the Christian Century, it is necessary to point out why this journal was chosen for a content analysis that focuses specifically on the interreligious and interdenominational dimensions on the civil rights movement. It became clear early

in this analysis that the Christian Century was committed to chronicling America's religious involvement in the racial movement. On October 27, 1954, the editors discuss how many churches have condemned racism as "unChristian" and then declare that "It is high time that the churches published this condemnation in the widest possible manner." (71:1296) They state in a June 1, 1955, editorial that "hardly a week passes without some citation by a church group on the racial segregation issue which shows how deeply that struggle has penetrated American church life." (72:644) Three years later the Christian Century asks the National Council of Churches (NCC) to compile the most recent "statements on racial justice and good will issued by Protestant denominations and responsible organizations." (75:164) Over twenty-five of these statements supplied by NCC are then presented, demonstrating a stand-up-and-be-counted attitude. In July of 1964, in an editorial on the burning of Negro churches in the South, the Christian Century editors said "we hope the National Council of Churches' Commission on Religion and Race will establish a fund for the reconstruction of burned churches on an ecumenical basis, and we will do what we can to support it." (81:956)

The articles the Christian Century published, such as "Integration Concerns Us All" by Nick Aaron Ford (72:170-71), served to show that the editors were interested in pursuing questions of civil rights for all people. Detailed descriptions of the first interreligious conference on race and religion held

in Chicago on January 14-17, 1963, also portrayed the editors' interest in the role religion was playing in what they saw as the nation's most pressing domestic problem. They marveled that this conference brought together "people who on religious grounds have long been estranged" (80:134) and saw the conference as an immense success in both interfaith and interracial encounters. Along with their words of praise were insightful criticisms that deserve to be mentioned here because of the lack of discussion in most analyses of the civil rights movement. The major criticism of the conference was that it failed to discuss the plight of the Indians, Spanish Americans, and other racial minorities groups besides the Blacks. The editors also noted a near exclusion of women. A survey of the literature on this period also shows that most recorders of history tend to leave out any history of oppressed minorities. So, here at what many commentators see as the height of interreligious and interdenominational cooperation during this period, we may make a judgment in regards to a pertinent question. Do the editors and writers of the articles feel that a positive attitude toward the acceptance of civil rights is connected to a greater acceptance of a religiously plural society? It would appear that at this point they make an explicit connection of the relevancy of civil rights to not only a religiously plural, but a gender-inclusive society. A journal with this stance should perhaps be considered as ahead of its time.

In an editorial in 1960 the Christian Century editors make

an interreligious appeal to Jews, Protestants, and Roman Catholics by asking them to unite for common concerns, such as the fight against racism, despite their conflicts. "Those differences should not be minimized or brushed over. But they also have many areas of mutuality, one of which is their common vulnerability to that maliciousness which plays upon the suspicions and superstitions of the people. Against that evil they should, in this day particularly, make common cause." (77:1012) In 1964, the editorial staff made an even stronger commitment to holding an interreligious orientation when they announced additions to their staff. They stated, "We present in this issue our new corps of editors at large, an interfaith, interracial group of 12 men and women who from time to time will contribute signed editorials." (81:1422) This group included a Roman Catholic and a Jew. The strong, common-sense statements on interreligious and interdenominational issues and the follow-up of putting into practice their declarations, showed the editorial staff lived up to the values they pronounced.

Another useful way to analyze the stances of the Christian Century is to examine the rhetoric. The editors of the Christian Century effectively use their ideas to persuade their readers with several methods. In a June 16, 1954, editorial the editors issue a challenge by examining the actions of the Southern Baptist Convention and their vote to commend the ruling of the Supreme Court. Here the editors write, "it did more than any other group in the country could to secure cooperation with the

court's verdict." (71:723) About a year later they emphasize this point by highlighting it in a discussion of Methodist problems with segregation, "The church as a whole better get ready to stand up and face the music." (72:588) The editors frequently link their stances with responsibility. In an editorial on the public school crisis they call on the church to play a role in prodding people to change their attitudes, to give up their patterns of racial discrimination, and to become good citizens. (72:967)

The editors pointed out any interdenominational or interreligious involvement in civil rights activities, a strategy that can be seen as giving their opinions a more universal appeal. In an editorial on April 4, 1956, they discuss Martin Luther King, Jr.s' convictions, stating that "When Dr. King addressed the Concord Baptist Church in Brooklyn on Palm Sunday evening, the invocation was given by a Roman Catholic priest." (73:414) Another good illustration of this strategy is in an editorial on ending racial bias in housing where they write, "Down to earth and firmly realistic is the plan of five Protestant denominations which have united in a pilot project for ending racial discrimination in city housing." Their seal of approval for this project comes at the end of the editorial where they state, "It is beginning at the right place and in the right way. It deserves to receive wholehearted backing." (75:188) When the editors include in their record of religious events an interdenominational detail and back religious attempts to improve

residential racial prejudice, we can assume they were making an active attempt to promote religious involvement in racial matters.

Identification is another rhetorical strategy that the editors utilized to link race and religion. In an editorial on enforced segregation in Virginia they discuss an interdenominational effort by a group of ministers who signed a statement opposing segregation as not keeping with the gospel and "contrary to the will of God." Their ringing endorsement begins: "We congratulate Fairfax county and Falls Church on having 48 ministers whose Christian faith speaks with such insight and courage on an issue confronting every citizen." (75:990)

Wording is, of course, another important strategy in attempting to persuade. Both passion-filled language and hard criticism were tools the Christian Century used. An illustration of the first is the September 17, 1958, issue, when the editors discussed Dr. King's new book, Stride Toward Freedom, asserting that the book "throbs with the conviction that Christian faith and the struggle for social justice go forward inseparably." (75:1046) In a rejoinder to the American people they aver, "It is a disgrace that our democracy can do no better than to force a racial minority to go through the ordeal it now faces." (77:461) The editors also argued that the interreligious effort played an important role in civil rights activity when they used popular phrases: "On January 24 of this year we attended what has become one of the 'must' events in Chicago's interfaith, interracial

life - the annual Kennedy Award dinner sponsored by the Catholic Interracial Council." (84:302) The words "throbs," "disgrace," and "must" are power words that convey strong rhetorical stances.

These are several of the more important rhetorical strategies that must be identified in order to understand the significant role the Christian Century played in the interreligious and interdenominational cooperation of the civil rights movement. Throughout this summary of the findings others will be noted, too.

Reports

Energy by interreligious and interdenominational organizations was expended to present hard sociological data and depict religious involvement in racial discrimination. The National Council of Churches' Department of Racial and Cultural Relations sponsored a report on 405 multiracial congregations in three major denominations which concluded, "Lay members of American churches are less opposed to dropping racial bars in their congregations than is generally supposed or than they themselves have believed." (71:1573) In Pittsburgh, several interreligious, interdenominational, and intergroup organizations "engaged in a collective study of the effects of the Supreme Court decision banning school segregation on local problems of desegregation . . . as a climax to a month-long community emphasis on race relations and brotherhood." (72:348) An

interdenominational effort in Cleveland undertook a study on the suburbanization of the Negro population, and its findings placed "squarely on the churches responsibility to provide a starting point of moral responsibility and courage which would prepare individuals and outlying communities for creative and constructive change." (81:27) It also indicated that growing poverty was one of the main reasons for "social ferment and protest" that had been behind the controversy over integration in the city's public schools and concluded that the "geographical barriers that separate Negroes from whites also separate the poor from the prosperous." (81:972) It was too bad there appeared to be no follow-up to these three formal reports (two in large cities and one by a large organization). It might have been useful for the Christian Century's readers to know what effects these reports had. Were they ignored? Or was there any evidence of positive change?

Commissions

The Christian Century records a couple examples of states that used religion to give credibility to their fight against racial injustices and other community problems. California did this when it appointed prominent citizens from the laity and clergy of several religions to serve on advisory boards which were established to figure out how to approach the civil rights problem. (77:720) Indiana had a similar approach when their

governor "named a five-member bipartisan civil rights commission, set up by the 1961 general assembly, to work for elimination of discrimination in employment and for equal accommodations for minority groups in public places." Commission members included Jews, Catholics, and Protestants. (78:987)

Conferences

Conferences on issues of civil rights by interfaith and interdenominational organizations were numerous. The Tennessee Council of Churches and religious leaders throughout the South sponsored a Conference on Christian Faith and Human Relations "in the hope of evolving from our common faith a plan and strategy on how to face and solve the practical problems of integration in the face of stubborn opposition." (74:347) The Philadelphia Fellowship Commission representing Catholics, Jews, and Protestants held a conference on equal housing opportunity. (75:1342) On March 30, 1960, the Christian Century reported on a conference, "Religious Education and Intergroup Responsibility" sponsored by the American Jewish Committee Institute on Human Relations, where "Religious educators . . . have hailed current studies of racial and religious bias in Protestant, Roman Catholic and Jewish educational materials as a big step toward reducing intergroup tensions." (77:396) In Pittsburgh, the Jewish Community Relations Council, the Pittsburgh Area Council of Churches' Department of Racial and Cultural Relations, and the

Catholic Interracial Council, promoted "a series of interfaith seminars established to help clergymen in the area better understand their role in promoting practices which will improve intergroup relations." (78:152)

At a White House Conference on Children and Youth, with interfaith and interracial attendance, a rabbi discussed how "People committed and sensitive to democratic ideals, are ready to eliminate discriminatory laws which hurt racial and religious minorities. Nonetheless, they are insensitive to prevailing public usage of invocations acceptable to Christians only." (77:920) This is mentioned because it is important to place into context the more "Christian" thrust of the civil rights movement, as seen by non-Christians and Christians alike.

Other conferences the Christian Century reported on included a study symposium on race relations in Dallas, convened by the Texas Council of Churches (79:992); a leadership conference in Washington D.C., called by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, that discussed racial prejudice (79:1591); one in New Hampshire, sponsored by the state council of churches and with Catholic clergymen in attendance, entitled "Christian Responsibility in a Desegregating Society" (80:1448); a Rhode Island meeting of 800 clergymen and lay leaders from 40 denominations and other religious groups that was called to "launch a continuing assault on racial discrimination and its effects through the joint efforts of church organizations" (81:284); a conference attended by leaders of the Jewish,

Catholic, and Protestant faiths in Kansas, designed to urge their constituents to call on senators to give support to the civil rights bill (81:477); an interfaith convocation in Washington D.C. that "called for an immediate passage of the civil rights bill to end the nation's moral crisis" (81:631); a week-long "Friendship Gathering on Race Relations" held by the Protestant councils in six New England states (81:994); a conference on civil rights legislation in Virginia called by one correspondent "the most important interfaith meeting on race relations since the National Conference on Religion and Race in Chicago" (81:1566); and an Institute on Social Change in a Democratic Society held in Norman, Oklahoma, that focused on the struggle for racial justice, and was sponsored by the National Conference of Christians and Jews in cooperation with the Human Relations Center at the University of Oklahoma (82:638).

Throughout America, in southern states like Texas and Arkansas, border states like Oklahoma, Kansas, and Tennessee, and in northern states like Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Minnesota, people were coming together in interreligious and interdenominational settings to stand against racial discrimination. If the first step in any problem is to talk about it and let it be known that there <u>is</u> a problem, then these conferences marked important turning points for the acceptance of those standing up for civil rights. The stature of those who fought for civil rights also increased. The attitude that was engendered by having the church or synagogue take part in

formalized social action appeared to have had enough effect on its members to help obtain the passing of the civil rights bills.

Probably the most significant meeting during the civil rights movement was the National Conference on Religion and Race convened in Chicago, on January 14-15, 1963. It marked the 100th year of the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation and was supported and attended by numerous Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish groups. This conference "called for very specific action by churches as institutions: the abolishment of discrimination in religiously sponsored educational institutions, in the employment and promotion policies of denominational agencies, and in worship services and membership policies; a review of all investment holdings and of the practices of contractors with whom the churches had dealings," and " all kinds of involvement in social action at the community, state, and national levels."[1] The purpose was "to bring the joint moral force of the churches and synagogues to bear on the problem of racial segregation," to "deal with the distinctive role that religion and religious institutions have to play in removing racial segregation and securing acceptance for all Americans," and to "begin a broader religious attack on problems of racial injustice." (79:855; 80:68; 80:133; 80:412) Mark Silk in his book, Spiritual Politics: Religion and America Since World War II, summed up the results succinctly:

The conference went about as well as its conveners could

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[1]Clark, p. 256.

> have wished. The delegates repeatedly acknowledged that the many mansions in their Father's house were themselves beset with racial prejudice and exclusiveness, and they called for integrating all religious functions and for adopting nondiscriminatory policies across the ecclesiastical board. From self-scrutiny, they proceeded outward; churches were to serve as examples to other organizations, as educators of the wider public, as pursuers of racial justice in the courts and legislatures of the land. And to cap the specific recommendations, there issued an Appeal to the Conscience of the American people to eradicate racism ("our most serious domestic evil") "with all diligence and speed," and "to do this for the glory of God." It was a glory in which all bathed.[9]

There were also several follow-up conferences, such as those in Little Rock, Arkansas (80:606); in Washington D.C. (80:893); in Des Moines, Iowa (80:1344); in Minnesota (81:444); and in Detroit (81:996), all of which were sponsored jointly by Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant organizations.

Special Events

Frequently there were special events that had interreligious or interdenominational backing. Across the country days and weeks were set aside by religious communities who wished to bring to the forefront racial injustices and join in fellowship. In St. Louis the church federation held a "day of thanksgiving for progress in integrated ecumenicity" saying that "Ecumenicity and integration are inseparable." (72:182) In Pittsburgh there was "a month-long community emphasis on race relations and brotherhood." (72:348) "The problem of racial desegregation in

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[9]Mark R. Silk, Spiritual Politics: Religion and America Since World War II. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988, p. 127.

southern schools was of primary concern in the National Council on Religion in Higher Education's annual 'Week of Work.'" (72:1188) In a dramatic show of interreligious solidarity, Religious Emphasis Week at the University of Mississippi was canceled because all of the religious leaders involved jointly withdrew from the program. They did this to show support one of the panelists who said he would discuss segregation if requested to do so. (73:260) There was a midday hour of prayer, held with the support of the Massachusetts Council of Churches, the Rabbinical Association of Greater Boston, and the Boston Roman Catholic diocese, that was "dedicated to harmonizing racial relations in the United States." (73:627) In Arizona a camping experience for youth focused on human relations problems across interracial, interreligious, and intercultural lines. (74:1020) A Tennessee community torn apart by racial disturbances held the National Folk Festival, attended by Roman Catholics, Jews, and Protestants, that set aside racial, national, and religious differences to sing to God in order "to demonstrate we are under God, one people." (76:706) The Greater Atlanta Council of Churches asked rabbis, priests, and ministers to promote "a day of prayer for law and order" in an effort to deal with the problems that would arise with the school desegregation deadline. (78:962) Chicago had an Interracial Home Visit Day that featured interreligious support. (80:154) Finally, Toledo, Ohio's religious community held Racial-Justice-Week Now. (81:26)

Gender

Although the Christian Century, and its authors and correspondents, use gender-exclusive language (e.g., clergymen), this does not mean they did not provide evidence of women actively involved in the interreligious and interdenominational cooperation then taking place in the civil rights movement. As early as 1954, women church leaders from fifteen southern states stood up and spoke up for a "Christian society in which segregation is no longer a burden upon the human spirit." (71:863) United churchwomen's groups, the state League of Women Voters, and B'nai B'rith, convened in Georgia to run a statewide segregation study commission. (71:987) The United Church Women and local councils of churchwomen banded together in Georgia (73:252), Dearborn, Michigan (73:541), and North Carolina (78:1261) to stand against segregation. They did, however, apparently play a negative role in race relations in Texas where the state council of churches recommended that the United Church women must "think carefully before endorsing or joining groups which seek to circumvent the Supreme Court's decision on segregation in public education." (73:588) This statement was apparently in response to the United Church women endorsing a white citizens council.

On a national level the United Church women initiated a nationwide, interdenominational project called "Assignment: RACE," 1961-64, to "train women to work for improved race

relations" and to "attack racial discrimination in churches, housing, schools and places of employment." (78:1261; 78:1312) Clearly women were involved in all sorts of activities that were concerned with civil rights.

Organizations

Council of Churches

Local and State

On June 2, 1954, Reuben L. Speaks, in an article entitled "Will the Negro Remain Protestant?" declared "The local council of churches should not only go on record as condemning segregation in religion, but exert every effort to free local churches from racial bias and exclusiveness." (71:669) Local council of churches did this and much more.

The following issued proclamations concerning civil rights: Oklahoma City Council of Churches (71:1587); Kansas City Council of Churches and rabbinical association (72:308); Greater Wheeling Council of Churches (72:712); Syracuse and Onodaga County Council of Churches (72:1004); Detroit Council of Churches (73:881) and jointly with the Roman Catholic archdiocese and the Jewish Community Council (74:971); Syracuse Area Council of Churches, the Roman Catholic diocese and the rabbinical council (77:362); Greater Cincinnati Council of Churches (80:1281); Massachusetts Council of Churches (82:498); Georgia Council of Churches

(71:987) (73:834); Texas Council of Churches (71:710) (72:127) (73:588); New York State Council of Churches (73:646); North Carolina State Council of Churches (73:941) (74:399) (78:404); Tennessee Council of Churches (73:1492); Pennsylvania Council of Churches (75:348); Virginia Council of Churches (78:632) (73:308); Ohio Council of Churches (80:27); and the Florida Council of Churches, Kentucky Council of Churches, New Orleans Council of Churches, North Carolina Council of Churches, Virginia Council of Churches, and Washington, D.C., Federation of Churches (75:166)

The following took part in special events that had their focus on civil rights: St. Louis church federation (day of thanksgiving) (72:182); Greater Atlanta Council of Churches (day of prayer for law and order for school desegregation deadline) (78:962); conferences on religion and race (many having an interfaith nature)--council of churches in Sacramento, San Francisco, the east bay region, the peninsula area and Marin county (81:1021); a week-long "Friendship Gathering on Race Relations" sponsored by the Protestant councils in the six New England states (81:994); a conference on Christian faith and human relations sponsored by the Tennessee Council of Churches (74:347); a study conference on race relations sponsored by the Texas Council of Churches (79:992); a conference entitled "Christian Responsibility in a Desegregating Society" arranged by the New Hampshire Council of Churches ("Roman Catholic clergymen were invited to participate") (80:1448); and a "citywide midday

hour of prayer dedicated to harmonizing racial relations in the United States" held by the Massachusetts Council of Churches, the Rabbinical Association of Greater Boston, and the Boston Roman Catholic diocese. (73:627)

Several councils of churches took part in studies and surveys that pertained to the lack of civil rights in their communities: 13 Pittsburgh agencies and the Allegheny County Council of Churches (72:348); St. Louis Metropolitan Church Federation (72:905); and Virginia Council of Churches (71:1382)

A couple of councils issued pamphlets and books: Washington D.C. Local Church Federation, "An Approach to a Racially Inclusive Church" (71:1312) and A Miracle of Social Adjustment (published by the Anti-Defamation League) (74:687); and Maryland-Delaware council of churches, "Tips to Talkers" that informed white speakers addressing Blacks. (76:784)

Many councils of churches were active in giving endorsements or support: to open occupancy in housing--Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches (75:290); to the freedom riders--Oakland Council of Churches (78:883); to the Commission on Religion and Race--Rochester Area Council of Churches (81:1040); and to ministers being penalized for discussing desegregation--Virginia council of churches. (73:165) After the Jewish Community Center in Nashville was bombed, it was given much support by "the Tennessee council of churches, the Nashville Association of Churches and various denominational groups and local churches [who] condemned the atrocity and began raising money for

repairs." (75:448)

Some were even directly involved in social action: boycott of local stores--Nashville Christian Leadership Council (80:688); assisting minority-group families to find housing--Lincoln council of churches (80:869); rehabilitation of neglected neighborhoods--Canton Council of Churches and the Urban League (80:1144); petitions--Toledo Area Council of Churches ("Freedom of Resistance") (81:973); extending housing opportunities, through election efforts--Detroit Council of Churches, the Catholic archdiocese of Detroit, the Jewish Community Council, And the Council of Eastern Orthodox Churches (82:1074)

These extensive lists of different activities in which local and state councils of churches were involved serve to show that cities and states all around the country were awakening to the injustices that were occurring on their front doorsteps. Proclamations, events, studies, pamphlets, and social action were much less common in the 1930s and forties, but these records indicate that in the fifties and sixties people's social sensibilities were being roused. Although history has shown that most of these local and state councils could have done more and sooner,[9] the evidence presented here indicates a fair amount of

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[9]It is necessary to point out here that, of course, not all members of churches active in the civil rights movement were supportive of it. And, as a matter of fact, ecumenical agencies were attacked and some Protestant bodies withdrew from the NCC. (See Singer, Charles G. The Unholy Alliance. New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1975. Although this book is particularly caught up in the problem of the communist influence in the NCC, it is a good history of the NCC's activities.)

activity.

The National Council of Churches (NCC)

The NCC was an early player in the history of race relations. In 1921 the Commission on the Church and Race Relations issued the following proclamation:

> In organizing this Commission on the Church and Race Relations we are animated by the conviction that the Christian religion affords the one adequate solution of the problem of the relations of the races to each other. Recognizing one God as the Father of all, and conceiving mankind as His family, we are convinced that all races are bound together in an organic unity; only on the basis of brotherhood can satisfactory relations be secured."[10]

And, a few days after the Supreme Court announced its decision in the segregation cases, the General Board hailed them with delight and called them a milestone in the achievement of human rights."[11]

During the 1950s and 1960s the problem of race relations became the overriding issue, and "by 1967 the Council was so engrossed in the racial crisis sweeping the nation that it devoted comparatively little attention to other areas of social concern and issued only one major policy statement of a social nature."[12] However, they issued numerous statements denouncing the closing of public schools, segregation, and any form of

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[10]Singer, p. 75.

[11]Singer, p. 208.

[12]Singer, p. 271.

racial discrimination. The Council held biracial consultations (73:357) and ecumenical institutes that attempted to break racial barriers. (77:1004) They entered the political arena by recommending an economic development program to help with housing, jobs, and integration in the schools. (82:1615) They also gave money to victims of racial injustice (72:1517) and endorsed the "non-violent movement." (78:766)

At the same time the NCC became involved in direct social action. In an article on housing Galen R. Weaver called for the NCC to become involved, through specific forms of action, in the fight for social justice. He suggested that the NCC ally itself with "the social education and action agencies of the several denominations and the National Council's departments of racial and cultural relations and social welfare." (73:207) A reading of the Christian Century during this period, shows that this is exactly what the NCC did. The National Council of Churches was a major force behind the Religion and Race Conference. The NCC asked church leaders to travel to Mississippi to protest segregation (80:1104); supported the march on Washington D.C. (81:509); monitored local programming "to determine whether both sides in the civil rights struggle are fairly presented" (82:898); and investigated civil rights abuses. (82:934) They were also involved in many other forms of protest, including political activity such as testifying before Congress on behalf

of civil rights laws.[13]

The NCC's involvement in civil rights activity was not without controversy. In Virginia their support for ministers who were resisting legally enforced segregation earned them castigation by some of Richmond's Protestant leaders who believed the NCC was not representative of 34 million Protestants. (73:308) The Chicago Tribune charged the NCC with being part of a "massive, daring, probably bloody assault on the racial barriers of Mississippi." (81:875) The Christian Century responded to this charge by pointing out that the Tribune misrepresents the NCC "by associating it with the violence it is desperately trying to prevent" and that the NCC is justified in "giving aid and comfort to the students and to the citizens of Mississippi who are resisting, with their own lives if necessary, the tyranny of terrorism wherever it appears." (81:876)

Part of the controversy not reported in the Christian Century, but relevant to the issues covered in this paper, was covered in a study of this coalition of religious denominations which showed "that members of the coalition became involved to an unanticipated extent in the civil rights movement. For several members (especially those with large southern constituencies), this involvement in turn resulted in such unwanted consequences;

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[13]The NCC even "maintained an office and an official lobbyist who appeared before congressional committees in behalf of projects involving the Council." Singer, p. 278.

as the loss of members and the reduction of financial support."[14] Also, the same article contends that "the NCC alliance allowed denominations with little commitment to the South to draw southern denominations beyond the degree of civil rights involvement tolerated by their commitments to their southern environment."[15]

National Conference of Christians and Jews (NCCJ)

The NCCJ was specifically interreligious in nature and active in the civil rights movement. In 1954 they promoted Brotherhood Week to help deal "with interracial and interfaith understanding." (71:930) The NCCJ collected information on the admission of Blacks to previously segregated student bodies. (72:200) The Montgomery conference of Christians and Jews sponsored a rally in an effort to promote better human relations. (73:855) The Memphis Round Table, the local chapter of the NCCJ, spoke out against segregation, asked for "adjustment between different faiths," and offered services to Blacks. (73:1460; 74:402) In Fort Worth, Texas, they co-sponsored a conference on "The Role of the Church in a Multiracial Society." (74:851) The NCCJ also co-sponsored an interracial, interreligious, and intercultural youth camp in Arizona that dealt with human

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[14]James R. Wood, "Unanticipated Consequences of Organizational Coalitions: Ecumenical Cooperation and Civil Rights Policy," Social Forces 50 (1972): 512.

[15]Wood, p. 519.

relations problems. (74:1020) In Des Moines they helped with a "program involving conversations between Negro and white families in Negro homes." (80:594) They sponsored, along with the Human Relations Center at the University of Oklahoma, the Institute on Social Change in a Democratic Society. (82:638)

Finally, in an ironic cartoon the NCCJ provided "A Brotherhood Week Reminder from the National Conference of Christians and Jews" that had a wealthy couple looking out of their window at a protest with Blacks present and saying, "Civil rights used to be so much more tolerable before Negroes got into it." (84:230) One Black activist from the 1960s commented in his book on living through the civil rights movement, as follows:

> I do not think the civil rights legislation so long delayed would have been passed without the continuing activities of organizations such as that of the National Conference of Christians and Jews and the many others that have worked in this area. I do not think our national and local governments would be so concerned with human relations had it not been for all that is wrapped up in the meaning of Brotherhood Week.[16]

Clergy

Of all groups of people, none were more involved in the civil rights movement than the clergy. If the documentation from the Christian Century is any indication, then it should be clear that the clergy played a major role in the civil rights movement. Ministerial associations, clergy brotherhoods, and other groups

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[16]Ralph McGill, No Place to Hide: The South and Human Rights, Vol. II, (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1984), p. 534.

made up of rabbis, priests, and ministers, frequently fought against civil rights violations in many different ways. They banded together across religious lines to support the civil rights movement and one other. Why did this occur? Jeffrey K. Hadden, in The Gathering Storm in the Churches, found through surveys in the mid-sixties that "whatever their theology, clergy as a group are overwhelmingly sympathetic to the general principle of achieving social justice for Negroes in America."[17] So this was a principle that regardless of other major differences, clergy rallied around.

A good example of the support clergy showed for each other occurred in Virginia when eleven Protestant ministers of Alexandria publicly defended a rabbi against attacks from segregationists. Rabbi Emmet A. Frank "had spoken out in favor integration and was then criticized with extreme bitterness by self-styled 'Defenders of State Sovereignty and Individual Liberties,' who said he had harmed Jewish-Christian relations." The clergymen's response was "that the rabbi's expression of his views had not in any way threatened our friendship with him and other Jewish friends in this city." (75:1196) Their support, however, did stop short of issuing a statement supporting his views on integration. Also in Virginia, a Christian Century correspondent mentioned that a by-product of the ministers' fight against discrimination is that they became "united in a closer fellowship." (73:190)

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[17](Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1969), p. 104.

The most typical form of opposition to civil rights problems took the form of published statements. The following groups of ministers (and sometimes rabbis and priests) issued proclamations on several problems. Large- and medium-sized cities and cities from the South, North, Midwest, West, and East, all had clergy standing up for civil rights. Protestant, Roman Catholic and Jewish leaders sent "a joint letter criticizing the Indianapolis Star for rejoicing over Congress' rejection of efforts to liberalize the immigration laws" in which "they charged that the editorial in question revived the 'discredited racist myth' that some racial stocks are inferior to others." (73:1339) Richmond ministers' association charged the Virginia legislature with a lack of movement on the question of integration and on an anti-NAACP bill that was passed. (74:306) Seventy-four Atlanta ministers called for the privileges of first-class citizenship regardless of race. (74:1340) More than 300 Protestant ministers representing thirteen denominations in the Greater Dallas area declared "that enforced segregation is morally and spiritually wrong." (75:619) Forty-eight ministers of Falls Church and Fairfax county, Virginia, circulated a statement arguing that enforced segregation defies the law and contradicts the gospel. (75:990) Another 312 ministers in Atlanta signed a second manifesto urging churches and synagogues to promote discussion on the racial crisis. (75:1421) Thirty-four ministers and rabbis in Silver Spring, Maryland, recognized their own part in discrimination by acknowledging their "guilt for failing to

awaken in our people a greater awareness of the sin in which we have all been involved." (77:550) The Des Moines area ministerial association distributed a pamphlet setting forth official Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish stands on fair employment and housing. (80:594) Seattle area clergymen promulgated an interfaith resolution that was the first step in translating "good intentions into direct action." (80:1183) Leaders of the Jewish, Protestant, and Roman Catholic faiths in Philadelphia area reiterated "a call to their communicants to make active commitment to the cause of racial integration." (81:1121) The Delaware Valley liberal ministers' organization emphasized the need for integration in housing. (81:1121)

The clergy, however, did more than just issue statements. They involved themselves in different forms of social action. Perhaps this was in part due to the deep concern the clergy felt over the churches' failure to influence the racial crisis. Hadden found that "Almost three quarters of the clergy agree with the strongly worded statement: 'For the most part, the churches have been woefully inadequate in facing up to the civil rights issue'."[18] So the clergy reacted to the churches and synagogues inaction. Rabbis and ministers, members of an interfaith committee, signed a pledge endorsing fair housing during Race Relations Week. (77:362) The clergy was credited with being the "major reason for the nonviolent, prayerful nature" of demonstrations in North Carolina (77:886), where they marched for

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[18]Hadden, p. 105.

racial equality and civil rights legislation. (80:1253; 81:890) Ministers "visited public school leaders, university officials, chambers of commerce, and municipal authorities to urge . . . change and offer their support" for racially integrated public accommodations, school systems, and colleges. (84:321)

Some of the clergy banded together, practiced civil disobedience, and went to jail for their beliefs. A well-known example of this was the twenty-four ministers who were led by Martin Luther King, Jr., in Montgomery, Alabama. (73:295; 73:325) A similar incident occurred when Protestant ministers, Jewish rabbis, and Roman Catholic laymen went to Albany, Georgia, "to pray with local Negroes seeking integration." These "prisoners-for-the-sake-of-consciousness" gained so much attention from the media that in 1963, this occurrence was voted third in importance as the top religious event of 1962. (79:1155; 80:36) A year later, also in Albany, Protestant, Greek Orthodox, and Jewish leaders signed a petition protesting the arrest of a former president of the Albany council of churches. His arrest was for "objecting to the beating of a Negro being arrested for disorderly conduct." (80:718)

The clergy also cooperated to oppose legislation that evaded compliance with the Supreme Court decision on integration in public schools in Virginia (73:254), forced all organizations to register the names of their members and their financial status with the state of Mississippi (74:366), and rescinded an ordinance which provided for equal accommodations in public

places in Maryland. (80:654) In Minnesota they united to present an interfaith appeal to the state legislature in support of any legislation that would outlaw housing discrimination. (78:253)

In an effort to eradicate discrimination in a northern New York resort area, Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant members of the clergy traveled to each other's pulpit to give sermons on human relations. (82:720) This practice, however, did not always receive total approval. In an article on the Student Interracial Ministry, Stephen C. Rose asserted, "The furtive once-a-year exchange of white and Negro ministers may salve some consciences, but it actually demonstrates how far we are, in our condescending efforts to be tolerant, from achieving brotherhood devoid of paternalism and mere lip service." (79:327)

On occasion pastors agreed to preach "simultaneous sermons calling for a solution [to the discrimination blacks faced at lunch-counters] based on justice and good will." (77:430) The clergy was counted on for support and guidance when the Greater Atlanta council of churches requested "ministers, priests, and rabbis . . . plan their vacations . . . to be available for any emergency leadership that may be needed until the school desegregation deadline is passed." (78:962)

These and other kinds of similar responses to the civil rights movement did not always endear them to their own congregations. (73:308) The clergy-laity split over this issue is an important one. "Conflict between clergy and laity in recent years over the civil rights issue is deeply rooted in

fundamentally different views about civil rights and the role that the church and clergy should be playing in this struggle."[19] The clergy views the "church as an institution for challenging man to new hopes and new visions of a better world. Laity, on the other hand, are in large part committed to the view that the church should be a source of comfort for them in a troubled world."[20]

In Virginia the council of churches had to pledge support to ministers who might be penalized for speaking out from their pulpits on issues relevant to the Supreme Court's decision on integration. (73:165) The Christian Century presented an article on this topic entitled, "What Can Southern Ministers Do?" that discussed how white ministers can speak out on integration without being fired. Their suggestion was to join ministerial associations. "Through their associations the ministers were able to stand up and be counted, gaining strength for their position by joining with others." (73:1505)

The clergy not only joined forces with those who were protesting the lack of civil rights, but they also got together to fight against them. Sometimes they did this in subtle ways and other times they were overt. In Dallas, in May of 1958, "330 ministers joined in signing a . . . resolution opposing enforced integration" (sponsored by the white citizens' council). (85:856) The Albany ministerial association (composed of local white

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[19]Hadden, p. 159.

[20]Hadden, p. 207.

clergymen) refused to meet with ministers, rabbis, and Catholic laymen from out of state who came to support blacks in their fight against segregation, stating that nothing "constructive could be achieved by such meetings." (79:1209) In an article entitled, "Are Southern Churches Silent?" (which concludes that in race relations they are), the author, Samuel Southard, points out that

> Few ministerial associations or local churches have taken specific action looking toward desegregation of their facilities; few have urged peaceful acceptance of federal decisions on access to public accommodations. For the most part ministerial groups that have taken such actions are to be found in large cities or in border states; e.g., Front Royal, Virginia, September 1958; Atlanta, November 1958; Chattanooga, February 1961; Birmingham, May 1961 and May 1963; Baton Rouge, June 1961; Montgomery, November 1962. (80:1430)

Southard suggests the primary reason for this silence is due to official "desire to conserve the numerical and financial gains accruing to religion as the result of its 'popularity' since World War II."

Perhaps the most famous case of clergy collaboration is a response to Martin Luther King Jr.'s activities in Birmingham. Clergymen representing eleven Protestant, Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Jewish churches and synagogues in Alabama called for obedience to the laws concerning desegregation in the schools. (80:189) King's reply, the "Letter from Birmingham Jail," printed in the Christian Century (80:767-73), is an engaging and moving answer to their criticisms. He argued that the real heroes of the South are those who join with the demonstrators who were "standing up for the best in the American

dream and the most sacred values in our Judeo-Christian heritage." (80:772) Many of those who stood up and made a difference were the clergy.

The Cooperation of the Churches

Some of those who lived through the tumultuous sixties believed that the Church was impeding social justice. James Cone wrote in his book, Black Theology and Black Power, "There is little question that the Church has been and is a racist institution, and there is little sign that she even cares about it."[21] And even later commentators noted similar sentiments, pointing out that religion is so often involved in intergroup hostility[22] Still there were others who believed that the churches and its members were heavily involved in attempting to gain justice for Blacks.

The role of "the church" in fighting segregation was also a topic in editorials and articles in the Christian Century. An editorial titled "Resist Racist Appeals!" states "The sooner exploiters of racism realize that they are confronted by the united opposition of the churches, the better." (71:1295) Another editorial declared that "the churches cannot permit our American system of universal public education to be undermined. To do so

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[21](New York: Seabury, 1969), p. 78.

[22] E.g., Bellah, Robert, and Frederick E. Greenspahn. Uncivil Religion: Interreligious Hostility. New York: Crossroad, 1987.

would be to fail in their duty to the nation and to their own redemptive mission." (72:701) An announcement by five major denominations in Massachusetts pointed out that "It is the responsibility of the church to challenge segregation in all its forms." (77:882) In an article on race and denomination, the author discusses the problem of segregation in American society: "The segregation problem in our land is primarily one of Christian theology and Christian unity." (78:1554)

The church was also praised for its role in fighting segregation. A labor leader "credited the churches in the southern states with making a major contribution toward acceptance of desegregation of public schools in the south." (72:382) In a discussion of the Fund for the Republic, an interdenominational organization established "to protect the liberty of the individual American as defined in the Bill of Rights and the Constitution . . . by fighting racial and cultural intolerance and conscienceless injustice," the author pointed out that "the best proof that the ideals and the objectives of the fund and of the churches are in harmony is the way in which the officials of the respective group have worked together to attain mutual goals." (73:949)

This evidence that churches played a major role must, however, be placed in context. Considering that this content analysis covered fifteen years, it might be expected that there would be even more references to church involvement in the civil rights movement.

Resolutions

"All too many religious organizations . . . smear the soothing balm of beautifully constructed resolutions on their itchy consciences . . . they talk at national conventions and then go home to the same society they have been criticizing without attempting to implement social values." (79:1591) So said Berl I. Bernhard, staff director of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission at a special leadership conference called by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. In a discussion on the churches' lack of involvement in furthering racial integration in Dayton, a Christian Century editorial asserted, "That it can continue even though denominations and the National Council of Churches have adopted statements favoring integration suggests a strong reason why the pronouncements of the churches on such matters create so little excitement." (72:1165) James Cone noted that "Occasionally, a church body passes a harmless resolution."[23] These quotations can be seen as representative of the viewpoint that resolutions are of little help. But another response differs. "What about resolutions, pronouncements and statements to the public? Have they no value? Obviously they do. They can bring unjust social situations before the general public and stir the conscience of the church and the nation to action. They can dramatize a need. They can state the long-range objectives of the

[23]Cone, p. 79.

church in terms that the man in the street can understand." (77:1148) There were, therefore, two points of view concerning the value of resolutions. Unfortunately there was little data indicating whether these resolutions had much practical value.

There was, however, numerous mention of resolutions throughout the Christian Century. Resolutions concerning civil rights, made by interreligious and interdenominational organizations came from Pittsburgh, Kansas City, Detroit, Richmond, Houston, Atlanta, Washington, DC, Dallas, Des Moines, Chicago, Birmingham, Miami, Portland, Seattle, Toledo, Philadelphia, Georgia, Virginia, Texas, New York, Tennessee, Florida, Kentucky, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware.

Some of these organizations included the following: National Council of YMCA, world, national, state, and local Councils of Churches, rabbinical associations, United Church Women of Georgia, ministers, rabbis, priests, citizens, leading churchmen, religious leaders, Roman Catholic archdioceses, Jewish community councils, commissions on human rights, National Conference on Religion and Race, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Catholic Interracial Council, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, CORE, and NAACP.

The resolutions covered the following: elimination of segregation, the public school controversy, the Supreme Court's decision on Brown v. Board to Education, race relations, racial tensions, legislation, home ownership rights, discrimination,

citizenship, intermarriage, integration, the lunch-counter sit-ins, state inaction in civil rights, the freedom riders, the nonviolent movement, racism, violence, human rights, and the House Un-American Committee's investigation of the Klan.

These resolutions were sometimes informative and sometimes ineffective. However, they did serve to make it public where the organization stood on civil rights issues.

Social Action

Were resolutions all that came out of the interreligious and interdenominational cooperation on the civil rights movement during the 1960s? No, there was a great variety of social action. In an editorial discussing the justification of religious forces using social action in racial matters, the Christian Century states, "Such demonstrative witness, motivated by love and expressed in nonviolent, passive resistance to evil, is thoroughly grounded in Christian teaching." (77:309) What follows are lists of different social action that took place during the years this study covered. Since these lists are as exhaustive a compilation as was possible, the readers may wish to only peruse certain sections. The Christian Century supported calls for social action, boycotts, home visits, letterwriting, lunch-counter sit-ins, marches and demonstrations, petitions, and housing rehabilitation.

Calls for Social Action

Martin Luther King, Jr. declared "The church must . . . become increasingly active in social action outside its doors." (75:1141) In Bridges Not Walls, Rabbi Morris S. Lazaren, "calls for joint social action through interdenominational activity to battle the injustices of our time, to speak out courageously and fearlessly through the dynamics of religion and make 'the common task of church and synagogue to spiritualize American life'." (77:103) Arnold J. Toynbee declared "Christianity and Judaism have a 'duty to make themselves felt in public affairs'" and that lack of participation will lead to the "division of society into more privileged and less privileged social classes, a thing which is at its worst when based on differences of race." (78:1088) Berl I. Bernhard, staff director of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, told a special leadership conference meeting in Washington, that despite "the vigorous involvement of the national organizations of Catholic, Protestant and Jew in championing the cause of equality and justice for all men . . . many individuals--Catholic, Protestant and Jew--as well as their churches and synagogues have been derelict and negligent in their failure to measure up to the standards set by their national bodies." (79:1591) In an attempt to have all possible action carried out on an interfaith basis, J. Oscar Lee, executive director of the National Council of Churches' department of racial and cultural relations, Rabbi Seymour J. Cohn of Chicago,

and Matthew Ahmann, executive director of the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice, got together for an interfaith panel on religion and race at the annual conference of church councils. They "stressed that the time of talk and statement is past; racial justice must be the first order of the day for the church," and also "urged the council executives to return to their home cities to enlist the churches to fight for the bread-and-butter issues that concern the Negro people." (80:915) These religious leaders were important figures in their respective faiths. Many people heard what they had to say.

It would seem that these calls for action had the value of showing people where their leaders stood, that is with other religious leaders fighting against social injustices by actively participating in the civil rights movement. Calls for social action were seen as quite important by the Christian Century's editors; they highlighted the calls through strategic placement in the journal.

Boycotts

Two examples of boycotts, a powerful economic tool, were utilized by Nashville and Detroit. "The Nashville Christian Leadership Council voted to support a boycott of local stores until the racial situation improves." (80:688) Detroit was "the first city in which official Catholic, Jewish, Orthodox and Protestant groups have joined to commit their vast purchasing

resources to firms that do not countenance discrimination in employment." (83:88; 83:1450)

The General Board of the National Council of Churches "endorsed the use of economic pressures as a legitimate means of removing race barriers, pointing out that economic pressures are unjustly used to deprive citizens of minority races of their rights and that it is the business of the churches to reconcile and abate such situations where possible." The board declared further that

> when other efforts to secure these rights do not avail, churches and churchmen should support and participate in economic measures where used in a responsible and disciplined manner to eliminate economic injustice and to end discrimination against any of God's people based on race, creed or national origin. That this is an action of far-reaching importance may be seen in the fact that it applies to campaigns of "selective buying"--a device whose earlier name was boycott--which are currently being used to convince business establishments of the unprofitability of racial discrimination. (80:798)

The NCC, having endorsed the use of boycotts, gave this strategy an air of respectability. However, the Christian Century did not document its use very much. Other sources, particularly the volume by David J. Garrow, Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Leadership Conference, 1955-1968,[24] demonstrate that this tactic was used by the Black community in many cities, and that people from all faiths and colors in these communities joined with Blacks in boycotting businesses that supported the perpetuation of segregation.

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[24](New York: William Morrow, 1986)

Civil Disobedience

Civil disobedience was a strategy taken by a few groups. Representatives of the Judeo-Christian family--seventy-five Black and white Protestant ministers, Jewish rabbis, and Roman Catholic laymen--were put in an Albany, Georgia, jail for demonstrating in support of Blacks seeking integration (79:1155) Perhaps the act of civil disobedience that became most well-known during this time occurred when Martin Luther King, Jr. was jailed in the Birmingham lockup. Here he wrote his famous letter--reprinted and commented upon by dozens on journals, newspapers, and magazines--in which he answered the opposition of an interfaith group that disagreed with his concept of civil disobedience. (80:767-73)

Financial Support

In Indianapolis religious and civic leaders formed a civil rights organization called Indianapolis Social Action Council intended to "raise funds for desegregation battles in the south and for opposition of local discrimination." (80:1010) "In the wake of the rioting and violence in the Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant areas of New York, a committee representing 47 Protestant and Roman Catholic churches in the two communities have begun a $100,000 crash program to provide jobs, training and

recreation for Negro youths throughout August." (81:1070) The Interfaith Emergency Center in Detroit (supported by Catholics, Protestants, Eastern Orthodox, and Jews) "said that 25 outlying churches are serving as collection centers for cash, food and clothing" for homeless Negro families and others. (84:1037) There appeared to be no evidence that showed whether any of these examples produced any results or did any good.

Freedom Riders

The General Board of the National Council of Churches supported "freedom of movement in interstate travel without regard to racial segregation." "While endorsement of 'freedom riders' by name was withheld . . . the board did name and endorse the more inclusive 'non-violent movement,' which includes sit-downers as well as freedom riders." (78:766) In a statement on freedom riders, the Oakland Council of Churches sent a letter to their members saying even if the Council was not "in complete accord with their total strategy" the Council commended their example of Christian fortitude. (78:883) Although there were many mentions of freedom riders during the early sixties, not many made specific reference to the religious make-up of these riders. Books by James Peck and Inge Powell Bell,[25] however, show that the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) was heavily involved

[25]James Peck, Freedom Ride, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1962) and Inge Powell Bell, CORE and the Strategy of Nonviolence, (New York: Random House, 1968).

in these rides. And Bell's book presents a survey showing the interreligious make-up of CORE (white members of CORE that indicate a religious preference are 56% Protestants, 11% Catholics, and 26% Jews)."

Home Visits

Two efforts at this method of social action had extensive institutional support. In the first Interracial Home Visit Day in Chicago, Friendship House, a Roman Catholic interracial center, the Greater Chicago Church Federation's welfare department, and the Chicago regional council of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations sponsored visits in Negro homes "to give white families the opportunity to ask about problems in Negro areas." (80:154) In Cincinnati, a community wide interfaith committee, sponsored by the Greater Cincinnati council of churches, the local Catholic interracial council, and the Jewish community relations committee, instituted an interracial home visitation program between Black and white families intended "to promote understanding between the races through informal meetings in homes." (81:414)

Letterwriting

In regards to the civil rights proposal before Congress, a

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[26]Bell, p. 67.

division of the National Capitol Area Council of Churches requested that its churches "impress on their members the urgency of writing to members of Congress, calling attention to their Christian spiritual and moral convictions." (80:1014) In a very active letterwriting campaign during Racial-Justice-Week Now in northern Ohio, "Some 400 letters requesting top-flight sermonic support . . . were sent to Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox and Jewish clergymen. About 600 letters to adult groups of the three faiths urged discussion of racial issues in each congregation; 200 letters to civic, social, service, fraternal and professional organizations asked for special programs on racial concerns." (81:26) The passing of the civil rights bills showed that constituent support played a role in congressional support for the bills. Had Christian Century followed up on their reports, it would have proved interesting to know just how much effect this particular strategy did have.

Lunch-Counter Sit-ins

In Greensboro, pastors and other religious leaders supported student protesters at lunch-counter sit-ins (77:430) The religious nature of the lunch-counter protests (noted because members of several different faiths took part in them) "showed that they are essentially an appeal to conscience." (77:885) As with the freedom riders, there were numerous mentions of the lunch counter sit-ins, just not many with specific references to

their interreligious nature. But particularly students, of all different faiths, took part in this method of social action.

Marches and Demonstrations

Marching and demonstrating were two of the most common types of social action in the sixties. Forty Chicagoans went to Albany, Georgia, "to demonstrate their support for what is called the Albany Movement" (a movement made up of Protestant and Jewish clergy and Roman Catholic laymen). (79:1057) On Independence Day, 1963, in Maryland, Catholics, Jews, and Protestants marched in civil rights parades in an attempt to integrate a privately owned amusement park. (80:902) The March on Washington included participation by Protestants, Catholics, Jews, and members of Orthodox churches. (80:973; 80:1094) Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish groups were represented in a demonstration of 500 Minnesotans who were expressing "their belief in racial equality and their support for pending civil rights legislation." (80:1253) In Philadelphia, 75 churchmen from the General Assembly of the National Council of Churches, were bused to Washington to take part in lobbying on behalf of civil rights, meeting with congressmen and urging them to enact civil rights legislation. (80:1572) Serving "notice that it is time to end the moratorium of noninvolvement in the race issue . . . some 130 Catholic, Jewish and Protestant clergymen" marched to the Nashville courthouse with a leader from each faith calling for

churches and synagogues to "exercise a prophetic healing role in Nashville's racial strife." (81:890) "Over 300 Bay staters--Catholic, Jewish and Protestant clergymen, housewives, students, businessmen--converged on the nation's capital March 12 [1965] to urge Congress to pass strong legislation assuring voter registration rights for Negroes throughout the south." (82:498) Representatives of the Catholic interracial council, the Catholic diocese of Dallas, the Unitarian Church, the Dallas council of churchwomen, a Jewish temple, the A.F.L.-C.I.O. and many Black church groups were present at a civil rights parade and rally in Dallas against voting restrictions and police brutality in Alabama. (82:500)

An article entitled "A Theology of Demonstration," on October 13, 1965, discussed involvement in the Freedom Movement, the value of inclusiveness, and how demonstration is a tool that can bring "evil to light" and end "the quiet frustration which oppressors equate with law and order." (82:1252) These several examples, from around the country, demonstrate that many clergy and laity, institutions and individuals, all took this message to heart; as evidenced by the quantity of references in the Christian Century.

Petitions

Another common form of social action was petitions. However, there was not a lot of evidence of this form having many

interreligious dimensions. The Iowa Conference on Religion and Race, in an effort to take positive action against racial discrimination, provided pledge cards for individuals and congregations to sign. The congregations were asked that they

> require 'a clause of nondiscriminatory employment in any contract to build or improve . . . physical facilities,' boycott supply or equipment companies 'who are known to have discriminatory hiring policies,' and not 'patronize or sponsor any activity at a place of public accommodation which discriminates against anyone because of race or religion or nationality.' (80:1344)

Individuals "are urged to 'adopt an open occupancy, non-discriminatory policy' in real estate transactions, to boycott 'places of business open to the public which discriminate against Negro or other minority groups, either as patrons or employees' and 'private clubs which refuse membership or service on racial grounds.'" (80:1344)

Housing Rehabilitation

Another special category of social action was projects where people came together to build or rehabilitate their living quarters. In Canton, Ohio, "the council of churches and the Urban League have joined in sponsoring a unique interracial project in which Negro and white teen-agers aid in the rehabilitation of neglected neighborhoods." (80:1144) Twenty-three Mississippi churchmen from several faiths formed an interracial, interreligious committee of concern "to help reconstruct burned Negro churches." (81:1230)

Finally, a certain organization that deserves special mention because of its record of social action is the Fellowship Commission of Philadelphia. This commission was made up of the Society of Friend's committee on race relations, the Jewish community relations council, the council of churches' race relations committee, the local branch of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the Philadelphia branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Philadelphia International Institute Fellowship House, the Council for Equal Job Opportunity, and the Greater Philadelphia branch of the American Civil Liberties Union. They were involved in

> helping draft and secure adoption of ordinances banning the distribution of anonymous hate propaganda; setting up a local fair employment practices committee; making public housing available to all without discrimination or segregation; helping to get into the city charter provisions for a local commission on human relations and for guarantees of human rights; working to keep racial, religious and nationality issues out of election campaigns; helping organize the Philadelphia citizens' committee on immigration and citizenship; making a regular series of studies on 'quota' systems in local colleges and professional schools and working to eliminate such discriminating systems. (73:1028)

They also backed legislation which provided equal opportunities for jobs, homes, and education; provided free bus service to intergroup programs; maintained a library of materials to further racial and religious understanding; and provided speakers, consultants, meeting rooms, a radio and television service, and a monthly report to the community. (78:286)

Principles and Values

Robert Wuthnow, in his book The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith since World War II, said when discussing the period of the civil rights movement that,

> it was clear that racial equality was part of the value system of American culture. And yet it was also clear--increasingly so as the civil rights movement unfolded--that this value system did not correspond closely with the ways in which people actually behaved. As Gunnar Myrdal had eloquently pointed out in his book An American Dilemma, a fundamental contradiction was present in American culture between the high democratic values to which it gave lip service and the practical realities of racial discrimination.[27]

So, now that we have looked at some of the practical realities, let us examine further the values that America touted by asking a few important questions. What religious values and vision guided those who fought for civil rights? Were the values that guided those who fought for civil rights the same as those who believed in interreligious and interdenominational cooperation? What was the relationship between human rights and civil rights? What was the relationship between the civil rights movement and the religious heritage of its participants? These are all questions that must be kept in mind when reviewing the data in this section.

During the civil rights movement, the call for readers to adhere to "Christian principles" was often sounded in the pages of the Christian Century, especially in reference to the Supreme

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[27](Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 147.

Court's ruling on integration in the schools. The Texas council of churches stated, "The Christian people of Texas, both colored and white, will accept the decision as an opportunity to put into practice the principles of a Christ who knew no race." (71:710) In a reference to the same decision, the National Council of the YMCA suggested its members "take a more active part in promoting freedom of inquiry and discussion of controversial subjects 'in the light of Christian faith and principles.'" (71:837) Women church leaders from fifteen southern states suggested the decision was an "opportunity to translate into reality Christian and democratic ideals." (71:863) The Georgia council of churches called on Christians to oppose racial discrimination and to "speak openly and uncompromisingly for action in accordance with Christian principles." (71:987) The Oklahoma City council of churches set forth its views on the decision when it proclaimed that "the decision announces no new tenet of Christianity nor of democracy; it simply gives to those who believe in these principles . . . the opportunity to put them into practice more completely in our individual and corporate lives." (71:1587) An interfaith statement by Kansas City's council of churches and rabbinical association discussed the decision, noting that it was in line with the principles of brotherhood, the founding ideals of the country, and the prophetic heritage of the Jews and Christians. (72:308) These midwestern and southern religious organizations were all early (note that all these references are in 1954 and 1955) in pointing out that the Supreme Court's ruling

was in line with Christian values and principles.

Others, including the Christian Century, followed suit. In an editorial on the desegregation ruling, they advanced the idea that "when government makes a move which sustains and supports Christian principles, as it has in this instance, the church will be judged by its support for opposition to this action." (72:701) The Syracuse and Onodaga County council of churches urged its churches "to take an active part in presenting factual information and interpreting the moral principles which are involved." (72:1004) The Virginia council of churches declared the Supreme Court decision on desegregation "in accord with Christian principles." (73:308) In regard to the state legislature's attempt to get around the decision, the Georgia council of churches asked its members to evaluate these attempts "in the light of Christian principles." (73:834) In response to both the Supreme Court ruling and racial discrimination around the United States, the Detroit council of churches "called for an end to all practices which violate the Christian principles of brotherhood, justice and good will." (74:1293)

Years after the outcome of Brown v. the Board of Education, Christians were still being urged to live out their principles. The lack of progress in the field of human relations was a concern of the Tennessee Council of Churches, which made clear that the council supported "the Supreme Court's decision on segregation because it believes they are in harmony with our Christian conviction and commitment." (73:1492) In Dallas 300

Protestant ministers issued a statement with a set of Christian principles to guide the "Christian conscience as it wrestles with the complex of problems identified as desegregation." (75:619) The National Council of Churches' annual race relations message in 1963, noted that "Racism must be understood for what it is--a religion competing with the Christian faith" and as such "is diametrically opposed to the insights of Christian faith." (80:166) Although these various statements on Christian values and principles frequently were not practiced in the churches, they persisted as official reminders where the churches stood on moral issues.

Human Relations and Rights

In a broader and more inclusive vein, interreligious and interdenominational organizations were also concerned about human relations and rights. The Montgomery (Alabama) Conference of Christians and Jews sponsored an institute in "an attempt to rally religiously motivated people behind efforts to improve human relations in the local community." (73:855) Throughout the nation the National Council of Churches' General Department of United Church Women sponsored 30 two-day workshops on human relations for education work in race relations. (73:1150) A Conference on Christian Faith and Human Relations, sponsored by the Tennessee Council of Churches, along with seventy other religious leaders below the Mason-Dixon Line, attempted to "bring

together white and Negro churchmen from all over the south in a deeper search for God's love and wisdom." (74:347) In Detroit church members called together for a social action meeting "expressed the belief that every local church should develop a program of education and discussion in [the] vital area of human relations." (74:565) A workshop for teen-agers in Arizona, sponsored by the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the YMCA, B'nai B'rith, the Urban League, and the League of Latin American Citizens, was held to give "experience in using democratic procedures to solve human relations problems, particularly across interracial, interreligious and intercultural lines." (74:1020) An interfaith appeal in Baltimore noted that "white Americans should realize that the country cannot advance in invention, science and technology and stand still in the important area of human relations." (78:283) The Tennessee Council on Human Relations, which enlisted hundreds of Protestants, Catholics and Jews, asserted "that the state's over-all advance in the cause of racial brotherhood has been 'hopeful and steady,' as it pointed to work that must be done if racial discrimination is to be erased." (81:249) A communique issued as an interfaith endeavor by the Jewish, Protestant, and Roman Catholic faiths in the Philadelphia area discussed human rights by stating that all human beings "have the right and duty to live in communion with one another. Consequently, racial discrimination can in no way be justified. It is in fact immoral to refuse to associate with other persons solely because of

race." (81:1121) In northern New York state an effort was made by the churches and synagogues to deal with discrimination by exchanging Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant preachers on Sunday and giving sermons on human relations. (82:720)

The Christian Century printed several editorials and articles that discussed human rights and relations. A February 10, 1960, editorial examined Christian statements on brotherhood and expressed hope that they would "open the way for stronger interfaith cooperation in dealing with the conditions which breed hate in young hoodlums. But the most serious of all U.S. challenges to right human relations is still the color bar." (77:157) Another editorial later that year asserted, "The demonstrations which are taking place across the country at chain store lunch counters constitute an eloquent reminder that civil rights are human rights and that dignity and self-respect will not tolerate their violation any longer." (77:276) In an article on Martin Buber and the Jewish-Christian exchange, Jacob Trapp stated, "We Christians share in the tremendous ideas of the Jewish tradition: man's potential worth and dignity; the dignity and ethical value of labor; the equal rights before the law of great or small, rich or poor, alien or native born; the preclusion, in law, of any system of class or caste; the doctrine that rulership may not be arbitrary, but must be under God." He also noted that "both Judaism and Christianity have been involved in the struggle to gain acceptance for the view that recognition of people's rights is a prerequisite not only for true piety but

also for true civilization." (78:1328)

In an editorial on the National Conference on Religion and Race, the editor, Kyle Haselden pointed out that the

> conference declared explicitly and implicitly that what is lacking in human relations is not ideas, instructions, resolutions, but deeds--deeds such as picket lines, sit-ins, freedom rides; the less dramatic but equally creative deeds of love and justice in our homes, our neighborhoods, our churches and synagogues, our public and private facilities; the personal deeds of prayer, faithful obedience, courageous individual witness to the will of the God who set the solitary in families and made all men one. (80:134)

An article on a theology of demonstration discussed the freedom movement and how it is part of "the global struggle for human rights," a step towards realizing the "American dream of equal opportunity in opposition to the forces of racism and the vicious circle of impoverishment. (82:1249)

These several examples indicate a direct relationship between human rights and civil rights. Individuals, organizations, editors, and authors continually made reference to the fight for human rights, for better human relations in order that racism might be eradicated from America.

The Bible and the Judeo-Christian Heritage

One of the significant themes for interreligious and interdenominational undertakings in the civil rights movement derived from the biblical tradition and Judeo-Christian heritage. The Bible functioned in several ways: it was used to justify racism on the one hand, and to foster goodwill on the other.

Likewise, several authors, speakers, and commentators pointed to the Jewish-Christian tradition as a guiding influence on how Americans should structure their value systems.

In late 1954, at the beginnings of the movement, the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches on Intergroup Relations, meeting in Evanston, Illinois, "declared its conviction that segregation in all its forms is contrary to the gospel, and is incompatible with the Christian doctrine of man and with the nature of the church of Christ." (71:1157) At one interdenominational meeting a minister pointed out that "Christians must . . . differentiate in the light of religious insights between Old and New Testament passages on racial discrimination. Most people who support segregation . . . quote detached lines from the Old Testament; but Christian understanding of the racial problems should be based not on Old Testament mores but on New Testament examples set by Jesus." (73:834) In Detroit an interfaith statement asked churches and synagogues to help with the racial integration of residential neighborhoods "in behalf of the prophetic ideals of equality and brotherhood." (74:971)

An article by Martin Luther King, Jr., "The Church and the Race Crisis," discussed segregation as "utterly opposed to the noble teachings of our Judeo-Christian tradition." (75:1140) The Maryland-Delaware council of churches issued a statement on civil rights in which they urged their "fellowmen to practice faithfully and humbly our Lord's teachings of love, righteousness

and self-sacrifice in a world which is strife-torn and saddened by selfishness, injustice and intolerance." (76:112) A book review of Morris S. Lazaren's Bridges Not Walls discussed the author's call for joint interdenominational social action and a "return to the ideals Moses and Jesus championed." (77:103) Ministers and rabbis in Silver Spring, Maryland, issued a proclamation pointing out that "discrimination . . . [is] contrary to the Hebrew and Christian traditions." (77:550) King, in his letter from the Birmingham city jail, once again pointed out that those fighting against discrimination and, specifically the lunch counter protesters, were "standing up for the best in the American dream and the most sacred values in our Judeo-Christian heritage." (80:773) An interfaith group in Dade county Florida, condemned racial discrimination "as contrary to God's law." (80:892)

An article by J. Oscar Lee on racism states that "many of the characteristics which determine the spirit and form of American life are rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition, which affirms that every man is of supreme worth because he is a child of God." (80:907) An interfaith call to conscience by Seattle area clergymen presented this proposition for thought: "The Jewish and Christian religions teach that God is the Creator and Father of all mankind, that we are members one of another, that to discriminate against any human being because of race, class, or creed is a sin against God." (80:1183) The Sixth General Assembly of the National Council of Churches used Galatians 3:28

as a foundation for their call for racial brotherhood and justice. (81:12)

The Christian Century also had several editorials that referred to the biblical tradition. In an editorial entitled "Resist Racists' Appeals!" they stated, "Clearly, repeatedly and with reasoned argument based on the Scriptures, on experience, and on sound tradition stretching over nineteen centuries, it has condemned racism as unChristian, unjust and unbrotherly." (71:1295) Other times in discussing opposition to segregation they called it "a mandate of the Judeo-Christian tradition" (77:37) and "its accent is that of prophetic Christianity." (77:309)

These examples serve to show that many of those fighting for civil rights turned to the Bible and their heritage to justify their fight. However, as many people point out, you can justify most nearly anything with the Bible, and it must be noted that there were several examples, not relevant to the interreligious or interdenominational dimensions of this study, where people did attempt to use the Bible to justify segregation. Still, this data indicates that many of those who were in the forefront of the civil rights movement, Jews and Christians, were pointing to their religious heritage as legitimation for action, especially nonviolent action, against racism and for integration.

Several other principles and values were evident in the articles, news events, and editorials of the Christian Century. Democracy, good will, patience, prayer, and social justice all

were mentioned several times. What follows is an enumeration of examples of these principles and values.

Democracy

Democracy was a value that Christians frequently mentioned. The Texas Council of Churches protested against evasion of the Supreme Court ruling on desegregation and said that these changes "are consistent with our beliefs in democracy and equality guaranteed by our Constitution." (72:127) In reference to the same ruling, the Virginia Council of Churches declared, "We call attention to the fact that the democratic process can function only where there is freedom to express different points of view and that the pulpit of the Christian minister must always be free to enable him to declare his understanding of the meaning of the Christian faith in the actual decisions of our times." (73:308) An interfaith statement in Detroit noted that "The denial of the right to home ownership to any reputable citizen because of race or creed represents a basic violation of the religious spirit as well as of fundamental democratic principles." (74:971) In an article on racism, J. Oscar Lee, noted "The beliefs that are used to undergird racial discrimination are contradictory to both that [Judeo-Christian] tradition and the democratic heritage [of America]." (80:907)

Good Will

As might be expected good will was an important religious principle. When a Black lady's husband was murdered and assistance in the form of a $1,000.00 check came from several sources, including the National council of Churches, the Christian Century editors said, "We hope friends of the council and of racial good will will remember this action when they decide on their year end contributions to the council." (72:1517) In Charlottesville, Virginia, a ministerial association adopted a resolution that called on citizens to carry out the Supreme Court's rulings on integration "with patience and good will." (74:306) The National Council of Churches General Board expressed appreciation for those "various church councils, women's councils, ministerial groups and individual Christians who are working earnestly for discipline and good will in situations of tension and occasions of violence resulting from racial tension in all parts of the country." (74:428) In a negative incident, a Sunday editorial that discussed the Racial-Justice-Week-Now, spearheaded by interfaith leaders, stated the leaders were "toying with justice and trying to invent instant goodwill." (81:27) The head of the Interfaith Emergency Center in Detroit, who was discussing the churches and synagogues that helped with racial problems of housing through food collection and gifts of clothing and cash, said, "Granted that these acts of charity and good will will not solve the basic problems, they nevertheless indicate the presence of a spirit

making an ultimate solution possible." (84:1037)

Patience

Patience was one of the most frequently commended virtues in the civil rights movement, much to the chagrin of some. Throughout the country groups responded differently in regards to the Supreme Court ruling on integration of public schools. The Texas Council of Churches welcomed the changes brought about and suggested that people should "apply Christian understanding, patience and forbearance." (71:710) Some Southern churchwomen said there was "a need for patience, understanding and creative action." (71:863) The Virginia Council of Churches urged "all Christians to move with Christian patience and hope upon a course of good faith and wisdom in order that they may not become victims of despair (73:308) and later published a statement that called "upon all Christians to act in all human relationships with patience, mutual understanding and love, deploring hatred and violence." (78:632) The New York State Council of Churches spoke out on racial tensions and asked that people "apply Christian understanding, patience and forbearance as a more inclusive Christian fellowship leads the way to a more Christian society." (73:646)

Although Martin Luther King, Jr., the official keynoter on Race Relations Sunday for the National Council of Churches, called for "vigor and patience for resolution and understanding

for pressure and peace" (74:155), he had strong words for patience and 'timing' in his statement from the Birmingham city jail when he was replying to a letter published by several religious leaders in Birmingham who called for patience in responding to racial tensions. (80:189) He pointed out that he had "never yet engaged in a direct action movement that was well timed according to the timetable of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation" (80:769) and that he hoped God would forgive him if the letter had understated the truth and was indicative of his "having a patience that makes me patient with anything less than brotherhood." (80:773)

The editors of the Christian Century were critical of those who called for patience in dealing with racial tensions, specifically President Eisenhower, who suggested patience to Black ministers. The editors suggested that he ask for more speed when it comes to civil rights. (75:637) Seattle area clergymen were close to the mark when they wrote that "Caucasians really cannot know the deep hurts and feelings of the Negro people. The current problems are rooted in an historical and sociological situation which goes back 340 years. It behooves us to understand the reasons why we cannot delay longer in giving the Negroes their long-neglected rights." (80:1183)

The point is that some people were vehement about how patience was no longer a virtue, despite any references to it being a "Christian" virtue, while others clearly saw that any rational discussion on race relations must begin with patience,

that to expect long-held attitudes to change overnight was too lofty of a goal.

Prayer

Prayer, as might be surmised, was seen as important to Jews and Christians alike. Seventy Negro clergymen planned an assembly in Washington D.C. "to pray that the conscience of the nation shall be aroused in behalf of racial justice." (74:581) Churches and synagogues in Little Rock, Arkansas, united in "prayer for a peaceful and constructive issue to all the city's racial trouble." (74:1251) In the "Appeal to the Conscience of the American People" released from the National Conference on Religion and Race, there was a request that American people "Seek a reign of prayer in which God is praised and worshipped as the Lord of the universe, before whom all racial idols fall, who makes us one family and to whom we are all responsible." (80:135)

Social Justice

Finally, social justice was an important principle to those who were concerned with the civil rights movement. In the 1950s, the World Council of Churches' assembly on intergroup relations recognized "that one of the major problems of social justice in situations involving racial and ethnic tensions is that of securing for all opportunities for the free exercise of

responsible citizenship and for effective participation by way of franchise in both local and central government activity." (71:1157) The New York state council of churches on race relations "urged that justice and equality be sought vigorously through reconciliation accompanied by love and understanding." (73:646) The editors of the Christian Century noted that "Since the establishment of social justice in any specific area of our common life must usually wait for expediency to come to the aid of morality, it is encouraging to note that such expediency is now coming to the aid of the Negro." (77:894) The earlier noted appeal from the National Conference on Religion and Race also asked the American people to "Seek a reign of justice in which voting rights and equal protection of the law will everywhere be enjoyed." (80:135) An interfaith "call to conscience" by clergymen from Seattle asked their fellow citizens to consider that "Whereas the achievement of justice for our Negro brethren may create temporary problems, these will be slight indeed compared to the evil they to long have suffered." (80:1183) The message to the churches by the Sixth General Assembly of the National Council of Churches noted that "We are grateful for those Christians who have shared in movements for racial justice." (81:13) A call by members of a conference on racial discrimination in Rhode Island asked for "commitment to racial justice in churches and synagogues as well as suggestions for specific projects to be carried out by interreligious interfaith task forces." (81:284)

Another editorial in the Christian Century noted that "Christian and Jewish influence was at least partly responsible for passage of the Civil Rights Act. The same deep concern for justice and mercy without regard to racial differences has long moved the religious people and organizations of the United States to protest against racial discrimination in our immigration policy." (81:1003) On the other hand, it is necessary to temper this viewpoint and note many commentators have pointed out that if it were not for organized religion the oppression of Black would have never been so great:

This long litany of values and principles found in the pages of the Christian Century provides a cogent portrayal of what religious vision guided those who fought for civil rights by means of interreligious or interdenominational cooperation. Regardless of whether these people were necessarily aware of this cooperation, they confronted the injustices of their day with good will, patience, prayer, and social justice. These values and principles are similar to those that were involved in the interreligious movement in the late sixties and to those that continue to be involved in the interreligious movement today.

Other Issues

Housing

Several reasons can be discerned for the intense amount of

interfaith activity on discrimination in housing. One may be that it was such a concrete form of discrimination, i.e., it was clear whether neighborhoods had Blacks living in them and the condition of Black neighborhoods. In an article entitled, "Housing: A Concern for Christians," Galen R. Weaver sees it as such an important factor in changing attitudes towards integration that he called on the National Council of Churches "to produce a documentary film on housing beamed at the consciences of church members," suggesting that "it should portray the effects of bad housing, of overcrowding, of color and religious discrimination and of the controlled market in housing and should suggest the ways in which this vast and urgent problem can be solved in each community by civic-minded men and women motivated by compassion and a sense of justice." (73:207)

Cities and states across America saw interfaith involvement in the fair housing debate. In Detroit the council of churches, the Roman Catholic archdiocese, and the Jewish community council called on churches and synagogues to "wield their influence on neighborhood home owners' associations in behalf of the prophetic ideals of equality and brotherhood." (74:971; and later the Eastern Orthodox churches joined them, 82:1074) Also in Detroit a pilot project--organized by five Protestant denominations with the goal of ending racial discrimination in city housing--was set up for a small city, a medium-sized city, and a metropolitan center in an effort "to develop public opinion favorable to desegregation." (75:188) In Des Moines religious leaders sought

to gain more complete racial integration in housing facilities. (76:334) In Minneapolis (76:1096), Syracuse (77:362), Ohio (80:27), Nebraska (80:869), Washington, D.C. (80:893), Providence, Rhode Island (81:284), and California (81:1021) council of churches, interracial councils, rabbinical associations, and other groups joined forces to support legislation for fair housing. Interfaith conferences (75:1342; 80:187) and a "Fair Housing Sabbath" in celebration of Minnesota's fair housing law were also held. In Warren, Ohio, an Interfaith Fair-Housing Conference "resulted in organization of a human relations council in which more than 400 churches and 16 endorsing agencies" participated. (81:26) The same "News of the Christian World" report discusses the churches responsibility to provide moral leadership in an effort to create constructive change in people's attitudes in the area of housing. The report also says "the Judeo-Christian ethic . . . offers an unequivocal basis for the acceptance and welcome of the Negro into the suburban residential community" and calls for the churches to "interpretation of the Christian tenet that before the eyes of God all men are brothers; that skin pigmentation can never be a just reason for the rejection of one's fellow men." Another news item discusses the Greater Minneapolis council of churches reaction to a city ordinance calling for open occupancy in housing and notes, "Surely this is an area where Christian witness can be especially effective." (75:290)

Richard K. Taylor, in "Property Rights and Human Rights,"

pointed to the record of the nation's churches and synagogues to prove "they could arouse the national conscience and press for the passage of national civil rights legislation" and issued an interfaith challenge to them: "Will we see in the fair housing debate God's call to us to affirm human dignity against the forces that would crush it? Will we end housing discrimination as we ended slavery, child labor and poisoned pork? Or will a sneaking commitment to 'property rights' place us in the realtors' camp and ensure our silence?" (84:1122)

Legislation

More than legislation was needed for results to occur in the fight for civil rights, as a rabbi at an interfaith convocation in Austin, Texas, pointed out when he said, "The law will write the letter of civil rights" and "we must create the spirit for civil righteousness." (81:866)

Two kinds of legislation must be chronicled in this section. The first concerns legislation being enacted throughout the country, and the second refers specifically to the two Civil Rights bills that were eventually to be championed by President Lyndon B. Johnson, after the assassination of John F. Kennedy. A large group of Arkansas religious forces displayed unity against two controversial bills that would have upheld racial discrimination (74:366) There was an interfaith appeal against racial discrimination in housing made by a Minneapolis pastor's

action group to Minnesota legislators. (78:253) In Utah a civil rights bill failed to pass, mainly due to "the Mormon tradition that the Negro is inferior," despite a joint effort by Protestants, Roman Catholics, minority groups, and liberal Mormons. (78:836) It must be noted that the Mormons' attitudes towards Blacks were not simply a "tradition." They derive their racial bias from a complex theological interpretation which comes from their scriptures.

In Nebraska "Protestant, Roman Catholic and Jewish forces were instrumental in passage of the most far-reaching race relations legislation in the state's history." (80:869) The Chicago Conference on Religion and Race charged that a petition, which called for a referendum on opposing open occupancy, falsified and distorted the issue, thus causing hatred and suspicion. (81:972)

The second type of legislation reported was responses to the two Civil Rights Bills that dominated much of the news in the mid-sixties. In 1963 the General Assembly of the National Council of Churches lobbied Congress, urging them to enact the civil rights bill. The Christian Century noted that Washington observers felt that the churches were "making their influence felt strongly on an important government decision." (80:1572) The next year the Assembly called on "the churches and individual Christians" to urge "not only immediate national legislation but prompt legislative action at all levels of government" in the areas of discrimination, open housing, and voting rights. (81:13)

In a formal conference "leaders of the Jewish, Protestant and Roman Catholic faiths in Kansas issued a call to their constituents to urge the two Kansas senators to give full support to the civil rights bill." (81:477) An interfaith convocation at Georgetown University called for passage of the civil rights bill saying that "if the religious forces of the nation are in earnest about racial justice, let them duplicate a thousand times on the local level the convocation's demand for a strong civil rights bill now." (81:631) Jews, Catholics, and Protestants joined each other in a joint press conference to refute the segregationist governor of Alabama George Wallace's charges against the civil rights bill. (81:810)

An editorial in the Christian Century noted in discussing the civil rights amendment in July of 1964,

> These major elements in the civil rights bill carry the approval of the moral sense of our citizens. They have now been established as law, in considerable part because the religious forces of the nation combined to express the national conscience through the National Council of Churches, the National Conference on Religion and Race and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and in other ways. (81:900)

In December of 1964, in a special report on an interfaith meeting on civil rights legislation, the correspondent pointed out that the "church and synagogue have become sophisticated about race relations and active in the movement, particularly in the past two years." He noted that the Kennedy administration "has repeatedly acknowledged that organized religion made all the difference in passage of the Civil Rights act of 1964." He concluded by suggesting that "Church and synagogue have much that

is relevant to say to government on civil rights." (81:1566)

Schools

Efforts by state legislatures attempting to get around the Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation in public schools by abolishing the public school system brought about much interdenominational and interreligious cooperation. In Georgia women church leaders "voiced Christian concern over the possibility that some state officials will seek to use the churches as a means of avoiding desegregation by urging them to establish private schools." (71:863) The clergy in Norfolk, Virginia, had similar sentiments. (73:254) A booklet that gave an account of how integration was implemented in the Washington D.C. schools entitled, A Miracle of Social Adjustment, was published by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith and distributed by the local church federation's Commission on Community Life. (74:687)

The National Council of Churches joined the fray when its Committee on Religion and Public Education issued a report that stated, "If the decision should be made in any state to abolish public schools, we believe the same religious principles which moved church leadership to support public schools in the beginning will call upon church leaders to give assurances to racial minorities that the churches will interest themselves in providing educational opportunities to all children." (72:276) In

the bulletin "The Churches and the Public Schools," the NCC pronounced ". . . the support of the churches for the U.S. system of public education as 'a major cohesive force in our pluralistic society' because 'we believe as Christians that every individual has a right to an education aimed at the full development of his capacities as a human being created by God.'" The pronouncement also endorsed the right of religious groups "to establish schools at their own expense and the right of parents to decide whether their children shall attend public or nonpublic schools, but held that churches and parents still have obligations to the public schools." (80:798)

The Christian Century made a forceful statement on this issue in an editorial concerning the perpetuation of church sponsorship of racial discrimination by schools that maintain segregation under church auspices. The editors argued that "it is not too early for the churches to serve notice on the politicians that their souls are not for sale." (71:1195) Later they linked the solution to the school crisis to "a matter of local good citizenship" and called on churches to "take a decisive part in rousing that good citizenship to action." (72:967)

Liberalism

One of the last issues that concerns the focus of this paper is political liberalism. Was religious participation in socially

just causes, such as the civil rights movement of the 1960s, guided mainly by political liberalism? This was not a question that the data could answer through explicit connections. Hence it was necessary to turn to other sources, specifically Robert Wuthnow's book that has been previously mentioned.

Wuthnow points out that many of changes in the American religious scene are due to the split that is and has been developing between liberals and the conservatives. The civil rights movement helped that split develop further.

> The civil rights movement . . . opened up a fundamental issue that was increasingly to become defined as a division between liberals and conservatives. Those who favored taking direct action came to be regarded as liberals because their stance seemed to support a speedy resolution to the problem of civil rights. This new breed of liberalism was defined not so much by theological orientations as by support for direct action in the broader turmoil raised by the civil rights movement. And conservatism came increasingly to be associated with the view, not that race relations should never change, but that direct action was too conflictual, too divisive, pushing too rapidly for short-term gains at the expense of religion's longer-term place in the social order.[28]

On the other hand, he noted, "On race relations, the cleavage cut through the middle of most of the larger denominations. Those with theologically conservative views tended to resist racial integration more than did those with theologically liberal views. But, taking these differences into account, the so-called liberal denominations did not differ markedly from the so-called

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[28]Wuthnow, pp. 147-48.

conservative denominations."[29]

Thus, it may be hard to make a definitive judgment on the question on how much the civil rights movement was guided by political liberalism. Still, a close reading of this data indicates to me that socially just causes in most cases were guided mainly by the more liberal denominations and the liberals in the clergy.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Finally, any news source covering the era of the 1960s which failed to mention Martin Luther King, Jr., would obviously have been remiss in its duties to reflect the religious dimensions of the period. In the Christian Century the first mention of King is in the February 29, 1956, issue (73:280) in reference to the bombing of his house in retaliation for the Montgomery boycott of the city's buses. Just a week later an editorial discussed the arrest of twenty-four ministers, which included King and others from different denominations. In the February 6, 1957, issue King's article "Nonviolence and Racial Justice" appeared along with an editorial noting that King was the official keynoter for the year's Race Relations Sunday and that "in a message drafted for release by the National Council of Churches as the theme for the day, Dr. King continues his call for vigor and patience, for resolution and understanding, for pressure and peace." (74:155) A March 27, 1957, "News of the Christian World" correspondence

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[29]Wuthnow, p. 224.

announced that King would address an interracial meeting endorsed by the local council of churchwomen and Greensboro's interracial ministers' fellowship. (74:399)

In 1958, King's final chapter from his book, Stride Toward Freedom, appeared in the Christian Century. In it he wrote, "Segregation . . . is utterly opposed to the noble teachings of our Judeo-Christian tradition." "Here and there churches are courageously making attacks on segregation, and actually integrating their congregations. The National Council of Churches has repeatedly condemned segregation and has requested its constituent denominations to do likewise." (75:1140) In the same issue the Christian Century announced King's appointment as an editor-at-large for the journal.

King's interest in having his work in the civil rights movement cross religious boundaries became apparent with his involvement in the formation of the Ghandi Society for Human Rights. He and other Christian leaders reasoned "that humanitarian secularists, Jews, Unitarians and others will welcome the opportunity to join forces with Christians in a nonsectarian organization committed to nonviolent resistance to and protest against racial oppression." (79:735) Another example of one of many of King's appeals for Americans to stand together to fight the injustices with which blacks had to deal, was when he said, "'No American is without responsibility,' and it is fitting that all Americans help to bear the burden. . . . Clergy

of all faiths' should join the . . . protest."[30] Just a few months later he issued a call "to all who would bear witness to the prophetic faith of our Judeo-Christian tradition to stand with the people of Albany as they strive for freedom in their second month of struggle to bring about just reconciliation of the community's racial groups." (79:1057) Forty Chicagoans--Protestant and Jewish clergy and Roman Catholic laymen--responded with a bus trip to support the Albany Movement. These examples indicate an implicit connection between King's call for a socially just society and an acceptance of religious pluralism.

The only other significant memtion of King related to the topic at hand, is to a dinner honoring King for his selection of the Nobel Peace Prize. Four Atlanta leaders--a rabbi, a priest, a college president, and the publisher of the main Atlanta newspaper--invited one hundred religious, civic, and political leaders to sponsor a banquet celebration. The Christian Century noted with annoyance that several persons did not reply to the invitation or responded negatively. (82:39) Three weeks later in an editorial entitled "Atlanta Rose to the Occasion," the editors mentioned that over 1,500 Atlantans attended the dinner. (82:164)

King's assassination and death were first discussed on April 4, 1968, and several other editorials, excerpts from his writings, and letters and notes from around the world were included in the next four issues. (85:475) Dr. King's death did not signal the end of interfaith involvement, but examination of

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[30]Garrow, p. 400.

the April, 1968, to January, 1970 issues of the Christian Century produced no more data for analysis.

VII. Conclusion

What role did interreligious and interdenominational cooperation play in the civil rights movement? The reports, commissions, conferences, and special events that were described depict a genuine interreligious and interdenominational dimension throughout the fifties and sixties. The NCC and other Jewish and Catholic organizations throughout America--on the national, state, and local levels--were very active. Clergy from all denominations and faiths were major players in the drama. Social action by churches and synagogues, particularly the kind organized by leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr., gave the civil rights movement a kind of legitimate force that helped in changing the attitudes of people across America and in securing the passage of the civil rights bills. The movement began with the calls to action and was followed by boycotts with interreligious and interdenominational support. There was also civil disobedience by representatives of the Judeo-Christian family and money raised through interreligious and interdenominational effort. Letterwriting campaigns, lunch counter sit-ins, and marches and demonstrations were made up of members of all faiths and supported by interreligious and interdenominational organizations of all sorts. The principles and values that were used to justify the need for change were often placed in an interreligious or interdenominational context. They reached back to the Judeo-Christian heritage and to

connection with the broader issue of democracy, social justice, and human rights for all.

What became obvious in the researching of this thesis was that there was a much larger interreligious and interdenominational effort to change civil rights than has been realized. It was not enough of an organized effort to leave the impression that interreligious and interdenominational cooperation was the major factor in the civil rights movement. And the charge that much of organized religion held back giving civil rights to those who deserved them for so long, still has validity to it. But people stood up with each other regardless of differences in their faith and fought side-by-side for the major social cause of their period. This social cause was, in part, advanced by a kind of religious consciousness. The religious consciousness of many people was activated by several forces: interreligious and interdenominational organizations of which their congregations were part, clergy that joined together to chide them into action, and writers and editors in journals--such as the Christian Century, Commonweal, and Commentary--that argued the necessity of coalescing to fight the social evils of the day.

The data from this study indicate that there was extensive interreligious and interdenominational cooperation in the civil rights movement and that it had an effect. It also should be clear that the Christian Century had an effect too. The sheer quantity of references that are listed in this paper show the

Christian Century had a substantial interest in portraying themselves as interested in the interreligious and interdenominational effort to change American society by backing the civil rights movement.

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Vita

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